United Nations

Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council extends mandate of UNMIH until 30 June; asks Secretary-General to report to it when conditions in Haiti might permit deployment for purposes consistent with Governors Island Agreement.

+ Security Council, in Presidential statement, expresses deep regret at Kabul food blockade; calls for end to fighting in Afghanistan so as to permit deliveries of humanitarian aid.

+ Observer for Palestine calls for speedy deployment of international presence to protect Palestinians in occupied territories, including Jerusalem.

+ ONUSAL says elections in El Salvador on Sunday were conducted in peace and liberty, despite some anomalies; early vote count indicates run-off for Presidency between ARENA and FMLN-CD-MNR coalition.

+ International Civilian Mission denounces reported use of rape in campaign of political violence and terror in Haiti; calls on Haitian Armed Forces and courts to deal with violations of women's rights.

+ Democratic People's Republic of Korea says it permitted all necessary IAEA inspections of its facilities, as agreed to in Vienna; alleges Agency is being manipulated by United States in attempt to strangle People's Republic, and warns of "resolute countermeasures."

+ UNEP reports that 45 countries -- 30 in sub-Saharan Africa -- had low levels of food security between 1991 and 1993; says many could increase agricultural production sharply.

+ Copenhagen Amendment to 1987 Montreal Protocol on Ozone Layer to enter into force on 14 June, having been ratified by 20 States.

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The Security Council today extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH) until 30 June, and asked the Secretary-General to

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report to it when conditions might permit deployment of the Mission for purposes consistent with paragraph 5 of the Governors Island Agreement. That paragraph called for assistance to modernize the Haitian Armed Forces and to establish a new police force with the presence of United Nations personnel. The Council also asked the Secretary-General to make recommendations on the Mission's composition and the scope of its activities within previously-established overall personnel levels. The Council took that action by unanimously adopting resolution 905 (1994).

The Council said it was deeply disturbed by the continued obstruction to the dispatch of UNMIH, and by the failure of the Haitian Armed Forces to allow the Mission to begin its work. It stressed the continuing importance of the Governors Island Agreement for the return of peace and democracy in Haiti, including the provisions of paragraph 5.

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The Security Council today expressed deep regret at the continuing food blockade imposed on Kabul and called for an immediate end to the fighting in Afghanistan, which was obstructing deliveries of humanitarian aid. In a statement read out by its President, Jean-Bernard Merimee (France), the Council said the humanitarian aid that had so far been provided had not substantially alleviated the plight of hundreds of thousands of the capital's residents. The Council expressed its appreciation to the countries in the region for facilitating efforts to provide humanitarian aid within Afghanistan and called on the international community to extend such aid urgently.

The Council stressed the importance of full compliance with all aspects of humanitarian law and recalled that those who violated that law bore individual responsibility for their actions. It also welcomed the Secretary-General's appointment of a special mission to Afghanistan to seek the views of a broad spectrum of Afghan leaders on how the United Nations could best aid national reconciliation and reconstruction. The Council said it supported the mission, which would leave Geneva soon, and urged all Afghans to assist it and thus promote an end to hostilities, the resumption of humanitarian aid deliveries and the restoration of peace in Afghanistan.

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M. Nasser Al-Kidwa, observer for Palestine, today called for the speedy deployment of an international presence, under the auspices of the United Nations, to protect the Palestinian people in the occupied territories, including Jerusalem. Citing the recent massacre of Palestinian worshippers in Hebron, he told the Palestinian Rights Committee that the Palestinians in the territories needed security and protection now, as well as during the transitional period.

The United States position on the reference to Jerusalem in Security Council resolution 904 (1994) was a step backward from its previous stance,

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Mr. Al-Kidwa went on to say. He expressed hope that the United States would take a balanced political position which would enable it to play its natural role as one of the two guarantors of the peace process.

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The United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) today announced that Sunday's elections had been conducted in peace and liberty, and that a final vote count had begun last night in the presence of United Nations observers. Preliminary tallies indicated that the National Republican ALliance (ARENA) and the Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN)-Convergencia Democratica (CD)-Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario (MNR) coalition, with 49.26 and 25.29 per cent of the vote respectively, would face a run-off election for President.

ONUSAL went on to say that it had called on the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) to rectify some anomalies, including the late opening of voting tables, overcrowding and slow voting, and the exclusion of at least 25,000 citizens with valid voting cards from the Electoral Register. However, ONUSAL expressed confidence that the next President, the political parties and the Salvadorian people would work together for the full implementation of all pending accords.

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The United Nations/Organization of American States (OAS) Joint International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH) has denounced the reported use of rape as part of a campaign of political violence and terror in that country. The Mission said that although it was difficult to hear testimony because of the private nature of such crimes, observers were now investigating a dozen cases committed in the last month.

Most of the rapes had been committed in working class neighbourhoods of Port-au-Prince, and the victims were often close relatives of political and trade union militants, according to the Mission. The perpetrators were generally unidentified armed civilians, but several victims had recognized their attackers as members of the Haitian Armed Forces or of the Front Révolutionnaire pour l'avancement et le progrès haïtien (FRAPH).

The Mission condemned rapes committed by persons whose duty it was to maintain public order, or by members of FRAPH. It called on the Haitian Armed Forces to bring the perpetrators to trial and demanded that the country's courts deal appropriately with such violations of women's rights.

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The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has told the Security Council that it has allowed the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to conduct all inspections necessary to ensure that nuclear material are not being diverted from its nuclear facilities In a letter to the Council dated 21 March, the People's Republic said the recent IAEA inspection of those

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facilities was for the purpose of maintaining the continuity of safeguards, as agreed to in Vienna last month. However, the IAEA had violated that agreement by claiming that the inspection was being conducted under the nuclear Safeguards Agreement.

The letter contended that the IAEA inspection team had made unreasonable and unjust demands and had issued threats, whereas the People's Republic had demonstrated good will through its flexibility. It also alleged that the IAEA was being manipulated by the United States in an attempt to strangle the People's Republic. If the IAEA wanted to resolve the issue, it should rescind its unreasonable assessment regarding the recent inspection.

The People's Republic went on to warn that if the IAEA tried to provoke it with further pressure, it would have no other alternative but to respond with "resolute countermeasures."

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Many countries with critically low food security could increase their food production dramatically, according to the first comprehensive index on the subject compiled by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The study, which was produced for the FAO's Committee on World Food Security, revealed that 45 countries -- 30 of them in sub-Saharan Africa -- had low levels of food security between 1991 and 1993. The FAO said almost half the developing countries it had studied could produce, in total, twice as much of the main food crops as they needed.

In an address to the Committee in Rome yesterday, FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf said the best way to tackle chronic food insecurity was to increase agricultural productivity, especially in low-income countries. He paid tribute to the international community's generous and timely response to food shortages caused by civil war, and asked for similar measures in cases of natural disasters.

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The Copenhagen Amendment to the 1987 Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer has now been ratified by 20 States and will enter into force on 14 June, according to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The Amendment adds new ozone-depleting substances to the list of controlled substances covered by the Montreal Protocol, which has been ratified by 132 States. The original Protocol and its 1990 London Amendment identified 15 chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), three halons, carbon tetrachloride and methyl chloroform as ozone-depleting substances and provided schedules for their phasing-out. However, the Scientific Assessment Panel reported in 1991 that ozone depletion was worse than anticipated, so the Parties to the Protocol adopted the Copenhagen Amendment the following year.

UNEP Executive Director Elizabeth Dowdeswell said yesterday that the Montreal Protocol had been successful because it was an ongoing process that relied on periodic scientific, economic and technological assessments. UNEP

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coordinates international efforts to protect the ozone layer, and provides an Ozone Secretariat to service meetings and analyse information on ozone-depleting substances.

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